

*China*  
Church Missionary Society.

NOTES ON  
CHINA AND ITS MISSIONS.

BY  
CONSTANCE F. GORDON-CUMMING,

AUTHOR OF 'WANDERINGS IN CHINA,' ETC.



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CHURCH MISSIONARY HOUSE, SALISBURY SQUARE. E.C.  
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## NOTES ON CHINA AND ITS MISSIONS.



IN an Empire of such vast extent there is ample space for every variety of physical characteristic. Far away to the north stretch the wide tablelands of Mongolia, while to the west rise the majestic mountains of Thibet, whence two great mountain-ranges trend eastward right across the empire. The northernmost of these is the Thsin-ling, or Blue Mountains. The southern range is the Nanling, a mighty ridge, with peaks 12,000 feet in height, which separates the Maritime Provinces from the Great Plain, and throws off numerous spurs to the south and east, giving peculiar beauty to the south-eastern provinces. The main range terminates at Ningpo, in the Chekiang Province, but crops up again from beneath the ocean, forming the Chusan Archipelago and many rugged islands all along the coast.

Between these great ranges lies a vast tract of fertile land, covering an area of 210,000 square miles, densely populated and admirably cultivated.

In a country where railways are as yet unknown, and roads are few and very far between, a vast amount of traffic is carried on by means of a system of canals, which intersect the land in every direction, connecting many of the chief towns with the great rivers. The Grand Canal, which connects Hang-Chow, in the province of Chekiang, with Tient-sin, the port of Peking, is about 650 miles in length—a mighty waterway constructed to facilitate the internal commerce of the country, and especially to enable the grain-fleet, with its enormous supply of rice for the use of the capital, to avoid the perils of the coast—perils of pirates and of storm.

This mighty canal crosses the two greatest rivers, the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hoang-ho or Yellow River, but has latterly become comparatively useless owing to the erratic conduct of the said Yellow River, commonly called "China's Sorrow," which is subject to appalling floods, when it bursts its banks and inundates vast tracts of country, finally selecting for itself some totally new channel. From the earliest historic days the Chronicles of the Empire record the ruin wrought by the freaks of this fickle river, which has changed its course nine times within the last 2500 years.

For the last five centuries, however, it had proved fairly constant to its self-chosen course, flowing through the Province of Kiang-Su, and pouring its waters into those of the Yellow Sea, about 150 miles to the north of the great Yang-tse River and Shanghai; and the erratic tendencies of the unstable waters had been well-nigh forgotten, when suddenly, in the year 1852, they burst the northern bank about 250 miles inland, flooding the land, drowning multitudes, and spreading desolation as they swept onward in a north-easterly direction, their course being guided by the rocky range which borders the huge promontory of the Province of Shantung, which divides the Yellow Sea from the Gulf of Pe-chi-li. Thus the river was compelled to flow onward till it reached the latter sea, at a distance of fully 500 miles from its old mouth, leaving its former bed a level plain of dust, to the despair of all gardeners, farmers, and traders.

Very soon, however, the survivors patiently resumed work, and, though various serious inundations have occurred, these were accepted as a matter of course in a country where all rivers have an eccentric habit of forming for themselves channels at a level above that of the great plain through which they flow, so that it is necessary to construct enormous artificial embankments to strengthen their natural bed. (At various points along the course of the Canton River, and also of the Yang-tze, these embankments are so high that to reach their summits one must climb sixty or seventy granite steps.)

Of course, no amount of human vigilance can always avert catastrophe when excessive rains bring down the waters with unusual impetuosity, and of this an appalling example occurred on September 28th, 1887, when suddenly, at dead of night, the raging Yellow River—fully a mile in width—burst its banks right in the heart of the Province of Honan, which, for its fertility, is commonly called “The Garden of China.” With awful, resistless rush the escaped torrent poured forth in a deluge about thirty miles wide and twenty feet in depth, till it had transformed an area of about ten thousand square miles into a raging, tumultuous sea, the flood rushing on with such impetuosity that millions of prosperous people who had lain down to sleep in safety and comfort were only awakened by the deafening roar as the surging waters rushed on through the darkness of night, overwhelming three thousand villages and cities! When morning broke, in place of a smiling expanse of richly-cultivated fields, there was only to be seen a boundless waste of stormy waters tossing about wreckage of every description, and thousands of corpses of men and beasts. The three thousand villages lay buried, some ten, some thirty feet beneath the waters, incalculable multitudes of the inhabitants having found a grave beneath their own roofs.

The Yang-tse-kiang, though springing from the same watershed, is a more reliable stream, and forms the great highway of commerce across the centre of the empire, while draining a vast basin estimated at 750,000 square miles.

The lakes of China are few in number. There are only five of any size: of these the principal are Tung-ting-how, in the Province of Ho-nan, which has a circumference of about 220 miles; the Poyang-hou, in the Province Kiang-si, which is about ninety miles in length by twenty in breadth; and Tai-bu, the Great Lake, in the Province of Kiang-su.

Of course, in speaking of an Empire extending from 18° to 40° N. lat., there must necessarily be a very wide variety of climate; Canton, the southern capital, being actually in the

Tropics, while Peking is subject to violent extremes of heat and cold—the heat in summer being exceedingly trying—the thermometer often upwards of 100° Fahr., while through the long winter months the cold is excessive, and the city is virtually cut off from the outer world, ice a foot thick rendering the river unnavigable. This severe cold, however, apparently counteracts the evil of excessive heat, for whereas the people of the southern provinces are pale and comparatively feeble, those of the north are stalwart and the children rosy. This is perhaps partly due to the difference of food, the products of the northern provinces being those of Northern Europe, so that millet and other nourishing grains replace the invariable rice diet of the south. Besides, the rice-growing districts are inevitably swampy, breeding fever, ague, and dysentery among the Natives as well as among foreigners. Nevertheless, the pleasantest climate is that of the central zone, extending from Fuh-Kien and Shan-tung on the eastern coast to Sze-chuen on the west—a belt which includes the most fertile provinces—the granary of China.

Sad to say, an ever-increasing proportion of the finest land is being absorbed by the cultivation of poppies for the supply of China's curse—opium. So enormously has the illegal growth of native opium increased, that it is said it will soon exceed the amount imported. And this is the natural development of that small beginning when British subjects first smuggled opium into China in defiance of all prohibitions, and then (notwithstanding all remonstrances from the Chinese Government) legalized the traffic by a treaty compelling China by the persuasive eloquence of the cannon to sanction our supplying her millions with the poison which none dares to sell in Britain except it be marked as such.

From first to last the whole history of this traffic is humiliating to all who value humanity and honour. It appears that a small amount of opium for medical purposes had long been an article of legal import into China, and the insidious vice of smoking it was a recognized evil early in the eighteenth



century. By the close of the century the import was found to have increased to 1000 chests per annum, and the Emperor Kea-hing resolved to stamp out the danger which threatened his people. So the import was absolutely prohibited, and opium smoking was declared to be an offence punishable by imprisonment or even death, as it is in Japan at the present day, where by law any person inciting another to smoke opium, or any person selling it, is liable to be executed.

Nevertheless, greed of gain induced English merchants to continue smuggling the insidious drug, till in 1832 a Committee of the House of Commons decided that it was not desirable to abandon a source of revenue so important as the opium trade. We all know the sequel, and the story of the two utterly unjustifiable wars whereby Christian England not only forced unwilling China to legalize the import of the drug which is ruining millions of her people, but further compelled her to pay heavy war indemnities,—the British official conscience, lulling itself, Cain-like, with the assurance of having no responsibility in the destruction of Chinamen, while gaining a solid advantage in the revenue of about nine million pounds sterling, which has annually enriched the Indian treasury from this source.

More grievous still for poor China is the suicidal policy which, hoping in some measure to check the import, has led the Government to wink at the enormous and rapidly extending growth of Native opium in almost every province of the vast empire. The profit on a crop of poppies being double that on a similar crop of wheat, it is perhaps no wonder that individual farmers prefer raising poison to food, and some statesmen in China even speak of the expediency of sanctioning this culture as a needful measure of self-defence, in order to undersell the foreign poison and drive it from the field.

Certain it is that prior to Britain's "Opium War" this domestic cultivation was exceedingly limited, whereas now, though still nominally illegal, in every direction wide tracts of the richest land, which should naturally be devoted to silk

and cotton, sugar, rice, beans, wheat, and other grain, are given up to this vile crop—a greed of gain which has already resulted in most grievous suffering. There is no doubt that the dreadful famines which have of late years scourged the north of China, must be attributed in great measure to this cause—the granaries having been left unfilled and no provision made for years of drought.

From all parts of the Empire comes the same sad story. In the far north, in Manchuria and Eastern Mongolia, this cultivation has increased enormously; and in the great Provinces of Hupeh, Kuei-chow (which has been described as the “Chinese Switzerland”), Sze-chuen, and Yunnan (the latter in the south-western corner of the Empire) tens of thousand of acres are now covered with sheets of poppy-blossom—white, crimson, dark purple, or pink—very lovely though so pernicious. A recent traveller in Kuei-chow tells how he travelled through a succession of beautiful fertile valleys, where for miles together not another crop was to be seen save poppies. It is estimated that in these provinces six-tenths of the arable land is actually given over to poppy culture !

The people in these districts affirm that opium-smoking has only become a habit in the present generation—now nine men in ten smoke it. Dr. Dudgeon gives a similar report of the appallingly rapid spread of “this unmitigated curse” in North China. During twenty years’ residence in Peking he did not see half a dozen people the worse for liquor; and although eighty per cent. of the men, women, and children smoked tobacco, he never knew them do so to excess. But now one-fifth of the population of Peking and Tien-tsin are slaves of opium, and even high officials, who a few years ago would have shrunk from its use as a pollution, now smoke openly, and offer pipes to their visitors. He has good reason to believe that there about 3000 opium-smokers within the precincts of the Imperial Palace, and he estimates that amongst Government officials about 40 per cent. smoke, and that about 80 per cent. of their attendants do so.

Mr. Pigott states that throughout the Province of Shansi, where till recently no one smoked opium, it is now used by eighty per cent. of the population, and is slaying its tens of thousands. That it is a dire evil no Chinaman dreams of denying, the most inveterate smokers expressing the deepest abhorrence of the vice which enthralled them. It is admitted by all to be a moral crime, which even the smoker never attempts to palliate; and while the sorest bar to missionary progress in China is the ever-ready taunt that the British forced the introduction of opium into the Empire, the people fully appreciate the efforts for individual cure at the Missionary Opium Refuges, which are now multiplied so far as very slender means admit, and which have helped some poor victims to conquer the craving.

Another phase of opium-taking is in the case of suicides, of which about 160,000 per annum are now due to this cause. It is, however, noteworthy that few of these are cases of opium-smokers.

The Government of China is an absolute monarchy, the Emperor being responsible only to the gods, whose earthly vicegerent he is supposed to be: hence his suggestive titles, as "Son of Heaven, the Imperial Supreme." He is regarded as the representative of Heaven, while the Empress represents Mother Earth. The Emperor is assisted in the administration of Government by a Cabinet Council and six supreme tribunals, but the ultimate decision on all points rests in his own hands, his sanction being conveyed by the Imperial Seal, and his remarks recorded by "the vermilion pencil"—in other words, in red letters, red being the emblem of all good.

Of all existing nations, none can compare with China for the antiquity of her historical records, which are probably authentic to as early as 2000 B.C. (when they merge into mythology). The earliest recognized dynasties are those of Hia and Shang, the fathers of agriculture and letters. But really authentic history dates from the beginning of the Chow

dynasty, about 1100 B.C., at which time China seems to have been divided into many independent States, though all acknowledging the suzerainty of its chief ruler. About 250 B.C. the Chow family were superseded by one of the Tsin family, who having reduced all surrounding states to subjection assumed the title of Emperor, and gave to the consolidated Empire his own name, Tsina or China.

This first Emperor built the Great Wall, called Wan-li-chang (myriad mile wall), as a protection against the Manchu Tartar tribes or Huns, who had ever been dangerous neighbours, and who continued to make incursions during the reigns of the Han (B.C. 206), the Tang (A.D. 608), and the Sung (A.D. 960) dynasties.

About the year 1269 one of the Sung Emperors was so rash as to appeal to the Grand Khan of the Mongols or Western Tartars to aid him in expelling the Manchus. Accordingly, Kublai Khan arrived at the head of an immense army, and having driven out the Manchus he took possession of the throne, founding the new dynasty of Yuen, the first foreign rulers of China. He afterwards conquered Manchuria, so that his dominions extended from Corea to Asia Minor, and from the Frozen Ocean to the Straits of Malacca—an extent of territory which neither previously nor since that time has ever been ruled by one monarch. He died at Peking in A.D. 1294.

In 1368 the Chinese succeeded in expelling these usurpers, and founded the Ming dynasty, which reigned 246 years, when Imperial misgovernment led to a rebellion, and the throne was usurped by a Chinaman. A general of the deposed Emperor now invited the aid of the Manchu Tartars. These came, and, after a seven years' struggle, acquired the sovereignty of the whole Empire. They then established themselves in Peking in 1644, and placed on the Imperial throne the first representative of the dynasty of Ts'ing, which still reigns, exercising absolute control over all the millions of Chinese.

The Tartar rule in China is somewhat comparable to our

own in Hindustan, where, after so many changes of dynasty there arrived about a hundred years ago, from the far British Isles, a handful of white men, who have acquired supreme power over some two hundred millions of the dark-skinned races. There is, however, this very great difference, that the manners and customs of Chinese and Tartars are almost identical, and the same religions and literature are common to all. The most striking difference between the races lies in the method of hairdressing, the Tartars retaining the natural growth, whilst all Chinamen, without exception, shave the front of the head, and cultivate the back hair to form a long plait, of which all seem so proud that it is difficult to believe, what is nevertheless the fact, that this very singular style of tonsure, which gives employment to such a legion of barbers, is simply the badge of subjugation imposed by the conquering race about two hundred years ago! The cruel custom of crippling the feet of baby girls is also peculiar to the Chinese, and is of unknown origin. The Tartar women, from the Empress downwards, all retain feet of the natural size, and marvel at the tortures to which their Chinese sisters must submit in obedience to incomprehensible fashion.

In considering our own relations with the Chinese, we have to bear in mind that till within the last few years, all intercourse with foreigners has been only calculated to excite in the Chinese mind hatred and contempt. So early as the sixteenth century the Spanish and Portuguese aroused their hostility, not only by greed of gain, but by making the extension of the Roman Catholic faith a veil for political intrigue. Then followed the early stages of British trade, which opened a back door for illicit smuggling of opium, and so led to the first Opium War with Britain in 1839. In 1842, the Treaty of Nankin was signed, whereby China was compelled to pay an enormous sum towards the expenses of the war, to cede the Island of Hong Kong to Britain in perpetuity, and to throw open to foreign trade the five ports of Canton,

Amoy, Foo-chow, Ningpo, and Shanghai, at which suitable quarters should be set apart for foreign residents.

The continuance of extensive opium smuggling led to the renewal of war in 1856, and in the following year Canton was stormed by the allied French and English forces. The forts at the mouth of the Peiho were captured in May, 1858, and a month later a treaty was signed at Tientsin by which China was required to pay another very heavy indemnity towards war expenses, and to British subjects at Canton. She was also compelled to grant protection to all of her subjects professing the Christian religion, and to throw open for residence of foreigners nine other places of importance, namely, Newchwang, T'ien-tsin, and Chefoo, in the north; Hankow, Kiu-kiang, and Chin-kiang, on the Yang-tse River; Tai-wan and Takao in Formosa; and Swatow in the south.

But as the French and British Ambassadors were on their way to Peking to ratify this treaty, a final and treacherous effort was made to prevent the foreign barbarians from entering the capital, which necessitated the re-capture of the Taku Forts, followed by that of Peking itself in December, 1860. Unfortunately the allies decided to inflict special punishment on the Emperor himself by the destruction of his beautiful Summer Palace—an act of Vandalism which affected the Chinese people with much the same indignation as would be excited in England by the deliberate destruction in cold blood of Windsor, and which to this day proves an ever-ready reproach and hindrance to missionaries, being coupled with the forced legalization of the opium trade.

While endeavouring to defend herself against foreign aggression, China was torn by that most terrible civil war, the Tae-ping Rebellion, which broke out in 1850. This extraordinary movement had a semi-Christian origin, and, if only it could have been controlled by judicious teachers in its early stages, it might have proved of very great value, its primary development being the destruction of all idols, the observance of the Sabbath, the printing and circulation of the Holy



Scriptures, and the preaching and practice of Christianity, so far as the preachers had themselves been able to learn it. Their leader appealed—but, alas! appealed in vain—for a teacher of the Excellent Way. Being left to his own crude interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, he evolved a rule of action reproducing the most bloodthirsty details of Old Testament history, in combination with observances intended to be Christian Sacraments.

Very soon, however, all that might have been turned to so much good ran to seed in frightful fanaticism and blasphemous assumptions of Divine titles. The movement also became political, and assumed the character of a patriotic effort to shake off the Tartar yoke, in token of which the Tae-pings ceased to shave the forehead and wear the long braided queue, but allowed their hair to grow naturally. So widespread was their success that, but for British intervention, chances seemed almost in their favour; when in 1865 British and American officers were allowed to take command of the Imperial troops. Then the tide of fortune was turned; but the scenes of horrible massacre and bloodshed rivalled those previously enacted by the Tae-pings,—horrors which roused the indignation of “Chinese Gordon,” but which he was powerless to prevent.

Thus the Civil War was suppressed; but those fifteen bloody and destructive years were not to be quickly forgotten, nor has the Tartar Government been unmindful of the aid afforded in its hour of need. In 1876 it agreed to throw open four new treaty ports, namely, Pak-hoi, on the coast of Kwangtung; Wan-chow, on the sea-coast, between Fuh-Chow and Ningpo; the river-port of Wuhu, fifty-five miles above Nanking on the lower Yang-tse; and Ichang, about nine hundred miles inland on the same river,—making in all about twenty great centres to which Europeans have access by treaty. From these the preaching of the Gospel can readily be carried on in the Maritime Provinces, and zealous servants of the Master now find it practicable to penetrate to the

remotest provinces. In fact, by treaty, they have the right of access to every part of the Empire, and there are comparatively few places in the eighteen provinces where it would be dangerous to claim their privilege.

The Rev. J. Hudson Taylor gives very remarkable details regarding the location of the great mass of the people.\* He shows first, that if we draw an imaginary line down the centre of the empire, at  $110^{\circ}$  E. longitude, we find that the eastern half contains four-fifths of the whole population—a fact of the utmost importance in view of our free access to the whole sea-board of China. Again, subdividing these eastern provinces into north and south at  $30^{\circ}$  N. latitude, that is to say, a little to the south of Shanghai, we find the population of the northern half to be nearly double that of the southern half, showing that nearly half the population of China proper is crowded into one quarter of its territory, and *that*, the quarter where the prejudice against the Europeans is least apparent, and where intercourse with the people is attended with fewest difficulties.

Over this vast area only one literature is revered, and one system of education recognized. One of the most remarkable characteristics of the whole race is such veneration for the written character that it is an act of merit to collect and respectfully burn all fragments of waste paper on which good words may possibly be inscribed. Printing was invented in the beginning of the tenth century, and in A.D. 932 an Imperial edition of the Sacred Books was printed. The invention of the characters now in general use is attributed to the Emperor Fuh-hi, who lived B.C. 2852, so they possess whatever merit attaches to the antiquity of having existed for four thousand years! The records of still earlier date were inscribed in a sort of hieroglyphic, generally known as “the tadpole character.” The characters now in use were also

\* “China’s Spiritual Need and Claims.”



originally hieroglyphic, appealing to the eye by a rude picture of the object to be described. In course of ages, from being more and more rapidly sketched, these forms became conventionalized into groups of symbolic lines retaining no manner of resemblance to the original forms. The very learned Chinese reckon the number of these characters at 50,000! Happily they are not all in constant use, and the man who has acquired a perfect knowledge of four thousand is considered to be respectably proficient. Even to read the very simplest book involves recognizing at sight twelve hundred of these intricate, crabbed characters, but to read the Bible necessitates mastering the four thousand—a task terrible alike to sight and memory, and one which generally costs a Chinese student about six years of close study.

Of course, with all their reverence for literature, a very large proportion of the people cannot attempt such studies; estimates have indeed been published, assuming that on an average twenty per cent. of the male population in the country districts can read, and perhaps eighty per cent. in the cities. The late lamented Bishop Russell, however, came to the conclusion that of the people of Cheh-Kiang (amongst whom he laboured for upwards of thirty years) only about five per cent. could read intelligibly. He therefore set himself to reduce the language to its alphabetic equivalents, so that it might be represented by our own twenty-four Roman letters; and in this simple form, with the assistance of the American Presbyterian Mission, he printed a considerable portion of the Holy Scriptures, and of the Church services, in the vernacular of the province, with the happy result that the children in the schools, and women, found that within a few weeks they could read and write more fluently than men who had bestowed years of toil in acquiring the ordinary Chinese characters.

Thenceforth, all students seeking instruction from the Christian teachers in Ningpo have commenced their education

by learning to read this simple type, which enables poor and ignorant persons to read with as much facility as their venerated literary men. It is, however, necessary that all scholars should continue to learn the elaborate characters in which alone all Chinese books are printed, as any form of education which did not include a knowledge of the Chinese classics would be considered despicable indeed. For the benefit of the common people, the Holy Scriptures have now been printed in the "Romanized colloquial" of eight great districts, and thus the holy seed has been scattered in remote corners of the Empire, where in many cases it has germinated and borne good fruit, without the intervention of any foreign teacher.

Quite recently, the Rev. W. H. Murray, of the National Bible Society of Scotland, has devised a marvellously ingenious application of Braille's system of embossed dots for enabling the blind to read and write. What with the ravages of ophthalmia, neglected small-pox, leprosy, and dirt, the blind of China are legion, but practically nothing had been done to alleviate the dreary existence of all these sightless hosts till the arrival of this poor Scotch colporteur, who, as he daily mingled with the crowds in the streets of Peking, pondered incessantly over the perplexing problem of how to help them.

In the first place he began by reducing all the sounds of the language to distinct syllables, and discovered that these did not exceed 408—a happy reduction of the 4000 characters in ordinary use. But how to make even these intelligible to the blind seemed well-nigh hopeless, till one day, while lying with closed eyes as if asleep, he saw outspread before him, as clearly as he now sees one of his stereotyped books, the whole system which he has since then so patiently worked out, and moreover, at once perceived with thankful joy, that by this system, Chinese sounds could be rendered so accurately, that whereas to a sighted person, learning to read or write by the ordinary method, Chinese is the most

bewildering of all languages, it would by this means become one of the easiest to acquire.

The inspiration which was assuredly vouchsafed in this vision proved, as it were, a chart by which the patient toiler was enabled carefully to work his way through a thousand difficulties extending over eight long years, at the end of which (by most ingenious combinations of numerals and mnemonic letters, represented by embossed dots, grouped on Braille's system) he was enabled to produce a system which so lends itself to the bewildering intricacies of the Chinese language, that the most delicate "tones" are accurately represented. These "tones," which by an almost inappreciable difference of pronunciation cause one word to convey a dozen different meanings, are the most grievous bugbear of all foreigners, yet, marvellous to relate, this system represents all shades of sound so minutely, that Mr. Murray's blind students are able by its aid to read even music with the greatest facility.

He finds that six or eight weeks suffice to teach any blind lad of average intelligence to read and write fluently, and though his work is as yet in its infancy,\* a number of those already trained are working as efficient Scripture-readers, assistant colporteurs, preachers, and church organists (on small American organs). The blind students now prepare and stereotype all books for their own use, and for sale.

Perhaps the strongest point in the future of this remarkable work is its bearing on the admission of Christian influence into the dreary homes wherein about 150,000,000 Chinese women of all ages, live their monotonous lives in strict seclusion. Some of these patriarchal households number from 60 to 100 women, ranging from great-grandmothers down to their female slaves. With the exception of the very few foreign ladies who have been able to make themselves

\* See "Work for the Blind in China." By C. F. Gordon-Cumming. Published by Messrs. Nisbet, Berners Street. Price 1s. 6d.

acceptable to their Chinese sisters, no direct missionary influence can possibly find entrance to these jealously-guarded homes. But Chinese women are quite as intelligent as those of other lands; they grasp a new idea, and ponder over it, and if it commends itself to them, they hold it with surprising tenacity, and endeavour to impress it on their neighbours. Now it is evident that each blind woman who can be taught to read the Holy Scriptures will readily obtain access to these secluded homes, where she will certainly be a centre of unbounded interest, and may become a living power with the wives and mothers of China.

This Mission to the Blind appeals to two of the strongest characteristics of China's millions, namely, their reverence for pure benevolence, and their veneration for the power of reading. The latter invariably secures respect, inasmuch as to have attained a certain standard of literary proficiency is the sole passport to all official employment, influence, wealth, and promotion.

From time immemorial the maxim that "only the wise and able should rule" has been acknowledged by all classes; hence the enormous care bestowed on education, beginning with self-supporting day-schools in every village, and culminating in the marvellously elaborate system of Competitive Examinations, which year by year sifts all the intellect of the whole land, giving every opportunity for the son of the poorest peasant to rise to the highest post in the Empire. Hitherto the subjects in which proficiency is required have been those stereotyped by the sanction of Confucius about 2400 years ago; but in the summer of 1887 the Imperial Government announced a totally new feature in its programme—simple enough it may appear to us, but in truth tremendously significant and far-reaching in its effects, as carrying the triumphs of recent science, and all the knowledge of the West, into the homes of the hitherto prejudiced people in remotest villages. This marvellous innovation is nothing less than a decision that henceforth philosophy, mathematics,

mechanics, engineering, international law and history, naval and military tactics, torpedoes, and marine artillery, are all to be included in the subjects of examination, though the necessity of being a thorough master of literary composition still holds the foremost place.

Such is the extraordinary reverence of the Chinese for their own literature that it may be affirmed of a large proportion of the educated classes that beyond the worship of their own ancestors, their religion consists solely in acts of homage to Confucius, the great sage who, born B.C. 551, took upon him the herculean task of classifying a mass of manuscripts dating from the remotest ages, and having reference to early Chinese history, religious ceremonies, and scientific discoveries. From these ancient materials he compiled a hundred books, and whatever further knowledge he deemed worthy of preservation was incorporated with his own voluminous writings, which have ever since been recognized as the most sacred heritage of every Chinaman, but which, while inculcating much that is excellent, have fossilized the national mind, the whole race assuming that the highest pinnacle of perfection was attained by Confucius, and that the idea of originating anything new is absolutely sacrilegious.

His teaching concerned man's moral duty to his neighbour in the practice of benevolence and wisdom, but as for his relation to the spiritual world, that was a subject on which he abstained from comment. Consequently his followers, finding no instructions on the worship of any god, consider that none is essential, and so the pure Confucian is a true agnostic, though he renders to the sage (as to his own ancestors) sacrifices and homage, not to be distinguished from worship. In every city there is a Confucian temple; some of these are very fine, but all are simply ancestral halls, containing only ornamental tablets bearing the names of noted saints. Of these, the most noted was Meng-tse

(whom early Jesuit writers call Mencius). He was born B.C. 372, and was a zealous Confucian missionary. His writings are very highly esteemed.

Although every Chinaman may be assumed to revere Confucius, the divinely-implemented instinct of worship leads most to at least a nominal adherence to the teaching of either Buddha or Laou-tse. The latter was the contemporary of Confucius, but was more imaginative and greatly occupied with speculations about the unseen powers and the human soul. His system has developed into the Taouist, which recognizes the divinity of the five planets as representing the five elements of our globe: Mercury representing water; Venus, metal; Mars, fire; Jupiter, wood; and Saturn, earth. All powers of nature are deified, thunder and lightning, wind and storm, sea-gods and river-gods, many of whom are symbolized by mysterious dragons. But the Taouist temples are full of hideous idols, and its priests deal largely in astrology and the exorcising of devils, and are simply quacks and conjurors living by the sale of charms to the ignorant.

The national gods of the Empire, chief of whom is Kwan-te, the god of war, are among the Taouist deities, but we also find their images in great Buddhist temples, together with those of many Hindu divinities; and in truth, notwithstanding all that has been written about the theoretical beauty of Buddhism, its pure practice is unknown in China as elsewhere, and these various systems of idolatry are inextricably blended one with the other, like many-coloured skeins of tangled silks—indeed it is by no means uncommon for one person to be an avowed adherent of all these different religions!

But whereas CONFUCIANISM and TAOISM are indigenous, and their sacred books are written in classical Chinese, BUDDHISM with its Sanscrit sacred writings was introduced from India by one of those accidents, if we may so call them, which seem to us so perplexing. In A.D. 65 the



Emperor Ming-te dreamt that a Mighty Teacher had visited this earth, and that he must send messengers westward to learn his doctrine. Obedient to this vision, he sent wise men to inquire what new revelation had been vouchsafed to mortals; but, alas! instead of travelling onward till they reached Judæa, his emissaries were captivated by the preaching of the disciples of Buddha, who, in the five hundred years which had elapsed since the death of their founder, had so effectually preached his acceptable doctrine of the brotherhood and equality of all men, that multitudes of the caste-ridden Hindus of Northern India had accepted his teaching, and indeed Buddhist missionaries had penetrated to China so early as B.C. 250, though these wise men do not appear to have known of them. Certain it is, that these Chinese seekers for a religion brought back, not the new Gospel of Christ, but the older Agnosticism of Buddha, which inculcates no worship whatever, while requiring of its disciples the practice of the purest virtues without hope of any supernatural aid in acquiring them, and with the certainty that till they do acquire them, they must pass through endless transmigrations, either upon earth or in one of the many heavens, until at last they attain to such absolute perfection, and freedom from any manner of desire, that they arrive at NIRVANA, which seems to mean practical extinction. On the other hand, they may pass from bad to worse—from the high estate of a prince to that of a slave, and thence to a reptile or a plant, their condition being always exactly regulated by their conduct, for “whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap.” Should they fail to improve during their earthly transmigrations, they have the prospect of passing through 136 hells, with graduated intensity of suffering, and also as regards the length of penal servitude involved,—the shortest term, however, being ten millions of years!

Assuredly, of this “Light of Asia” we can only say, “How great is its darkness!” Though still the professed

religion of so very large a number of the human race, Buddhism has absolutely died out in Northern India, or only lingers in its remotest mountains bordering on Thibet. In China its temples are all falling into decay, and few, if any, new ones are built. Its priests are mostly illiterate, unable to read their own sacred books, and are held in the utmost contempt, not only by the educated classes, but even by those who seem to be the most devout worshippers of the saintly Buddha, and of all the gods and goddesses whose shrines find a place within his temples, though such worship is all at variance with his teaching. One curious difference between the representation of Buddha in China and in Ceylon is, that whereas in the latter country he is generally shown in three attitudes—sitting, standing, and reclining—in the former we frequently find three gigantic images exactly alike, representing the three Buddhas of the past, the present, and the future.

TAOUISM has equally little hold over the educated classes, and only retains a hold on the ignorant by the pretended intercourse with the dead, and exorcising of evil spirits which cause diseases. Its priests are grossly ignorant, few understanding even the principles of the faith they profess. They are most commonly attired in slate-coloured garments, and their wives and families live within the precincts of the temple. The Buddhist priests and monks, on the other hand, are celibates, and are distinguished at a glance by shaven heads and yellow or red robes.

Of the RITUAL STATE WORSHIP, in which the Emperor alone offers worship to the Gods of Heaven and Earth, Land and Grain, Sun and Moon, Genii and divers Sages—each in separate temples,—and of the ANCESTOR WORSHIP, which is the one true religion of the empire, we will speak presently. Both are indigenous.

MOHAMMEDAN preachers arrived in China in the seventh century, uncompromisingly declaring the unity of God and the iniquity of idolatry. They made many converts, and



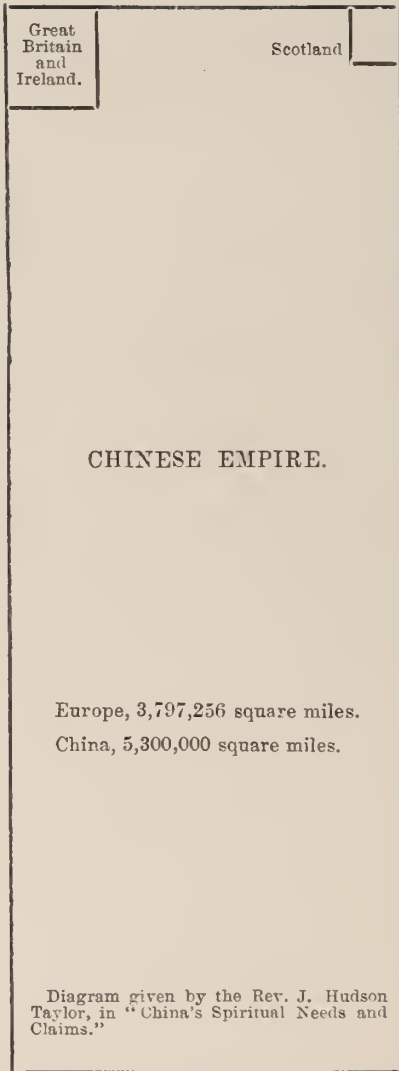
the total number of Chinese Mohammedans is now estimated at thirty millions. They are most numerous in the North-Western and Western Provinces, where about one-third of the inhabitants profess this creed, to which they rigidly adhere. They have mosques in all parts of the Empire, from Peking to Canton.

In point of fact, the Chinese are remarkably tolerant of all religions, provided they are not made a cloak for political aggression, and do not interfere with Ancestral Worship. To these two features must be attributed much of the success and all the failures of Roman Catholicism, which at the present time reckons its Native adherents at one million.

There is reason to believe that the Gospel was preached in China in the first century of the Christian era, and it is beyond question that the Nestorians obtained considerable influence in the seventh century, and, under the sanction of successive Emperors, carried on extensive Christian Mission work until the thirteenth century, when their influence seems to have waned, and gradually all trace of their teaching faded away.

In considering China as a mission-field, one may well feel staggered by the stupendous extent of territory, and the enormous population of this vast empire, which comprises one-tenth of the habitable world. That the eye may assist the mind to grasp this subject, let us glance at the accompanying diagram. The two upright lines represent the relative size of China and Europe, the former representing an area of 5,300,000 square miles, the latter, with its islands, 3,797,256 square miles, showing that the sway of the Chinese Emperor extends over a territory about one-fourth larger than the whole of Europe.

The oblong diagram shows something like the proportions of the great empire contrasted with those of Great Britain and Ireland, with their 120,000 square miles, and



of Scotland with its 30,000 square miles.

Only about two-fifths of this vast area are comprised in the eighteen provinces of China proper, which include the two large islands of Hainan and Formosa. The remaining three-fifths include Thibet, Chinese Tartary, Mongolia, Manchuria, and Corea on the north, and Cochín China on the south.

Though so vast in extent, Thibet, Mongolia, and Manchuria contribute a comparatively small proportion of the population—probably not more than 23,000,000, whereas that of the eighteen provinces amounts by the lowest recent computation to 227,000,000, thus giving a total of 250,000,000. But on this subject it is impossible to obtain anything approaching to authentic information;

the Chinese themselves say that no complete census has

been taken since the close of the last century, and although forty years ago the generally accepted estimate was about 400,000,000, it is now understood that the wide-spread devastation of the prolonged civil war, and repeated appalling famines, floods, and pestilences, have largely reduced that total. Add to these the rapidly increasing habit of excessive opium-smoking, which tells so fatally on the offspring of the smoker, both as regards their numbers and their vitality, and allow also for extensive emigration to many foreign lands, and it is evident that (although so competent a judge as Sir Thomas Wade allowed 320,000,000 to pass as a fair estimate in connection with the London Relief Committee at the time of the terrible famine in the northern provinces) there may now be good reason for accepting the reduced calculation. Even this shows that China's millions constitute nearly one-fifth of the human race—and that, too, a race which seems destined to colonize in every corner of the world, so that whatever influence can be gained over it is likely to be far-reaching indeed.

The most wonderful thing concerning this race, which truly is as the sand of the sea for multitude, is that notwithstanding minor differences between the people of the far north and those of the extreme south, the whole race is essentially one in its leading characteristics. In all alike there is the same strongly marked mercantile spirit, the same industry, frugality and sobriety (except as regards the recent most lamentable and rapid development of opium-smoking throughout the Empire), the same skill in divers handicrafts, such as ivory carving, wood carving, exquisite embroidery, manufacture of silk, cotton, and linen stuffs, filigree work in precious metals, marvellous casting in bronze, manufacture of fine lacquer, of pottery and porcelain, the same reverence for literature, the same care and skill in agriculture, the same enslaving dread of mysterious natural forces, the spirits which rule wind and water, land and rivers, and

especially the dead ancestral spirits to whom propitiatory sacrifices must be ceaselessly offered to secure their goodwill or avert their malevolence. Whereas within the boundaries of British India there are no less than 106 distinct languages, in China, although there are such differences in dialect that the colloquial language of the north is scarcely comprehensible to the man of the south, there is but one written language, which is current throughout the country, and the classical Mandarin Chinese is understood by all save the people of Fuh-kien, Kwantung, and part of Kwang-si. Over this vast area one Government holds absolute sway ; all are ruled by the same laws, which regulate even such minutiae as the day when winter clothes shall be exchanged for those appointed for summer, or that on which the first furrow shall be ploughed.

The latter is a very important ceremony, for the Emperor (who in certain very remarkable acts of worship offered to the Supreme God of heaven, acts as High Priest for his people) likewise officiates on certain days at the Temples of Sun, Moon, Earth, and Planets, and also at that of Agriculture, where, at the beginning of spring (about the fifth of March), having first offered a sacrificial banquet to the God of Husbandry in presence of the great nobles, the Emperor and the Imperial Princes put off their official dress and assume that of peasants, when they adjourn to a field ready for ploughing, and each takes his place in charge of an imperial yellow plough drawn by a buffalo. Each noble ploughman must plough nine furrows, and each is followed by an official whose duty it is to sow the grain in the newly turned earth, while two companies of choristers, robed in festive attire, chant anthems in praise of agriculture. This remarkable ceremony is said to have been instituted by the Emperor Shun, who reigned about B.C. 2200, and was himself a keen practical farmer. When the Emperor has thus commenced work, his example is followed by the great officials in every city throughout the Empire,

and the farmers are then at liberty to commence work in earnest.

The various acts of Nature-worship in which the Emperor assumes the character of High Priest are very remarkable, and are performed at stated seasons at temples quite unique in character, which are set apart for this purpose, and are never used between whites.\* The most striking of these is the Temple of Heaven, where, prostrate on an elevated and roofless circular platform of pure white marble, the Emperor kneels in lowliest adoration of Shang-ti, the Supreme Lord of Heaven—his courtiers and nobles kneeling reverently around on lower terraces of the same marble mould—an open-air temple whose only roof is the starry canopy of the midnight heaven.

Then, escorted by 234 musicians robed in heaven's blue, and an equal number of dancers, who perform slow and solemn religious dances, and followed by all his princes and nobles, the Imperial High Priest passes on to the altars of sacrifice, namely eight great braziers of iron, and a green porcelain furnace, in which are offered costly burnt sacrifices of beautiful pieces of silk, incense, and slaughtered animals. The ceremonial is very elaborate and very solemn, and concludes with a most remarkable sacramental mystery. While the Emperor has been presenting cups of wine and offerings of food, the musicians have chanted "hymns of harmonious peace" with accompaniments of stringed instruments, after which there is a great stillness. Then a single voice is heard chanting the words, "Give the Cup of Blessing and the Meat of Blessing") whereupon officers appointed for this honour present the Cup of Blessing and the Meat of Blessing to the Emperor, who partakes of each, and again prostrates himself and knocks his forehead three times against the ground, and then nine times more to

\* For fuller details see "Wanderings in China," by C. F. Gordon-Cumming. Published by W. Blackwood and Son.

symbolize his thankful reception of these gifts. All the princes and nobles present exactly follow the example of the Emperor; then the choir bursts forth in a "song of glorious peace."

In none of these temples is there any image to suggest idolatry, the celestial and terrestrial powers being alike represented only by simple wooden tablets, placed upright in stands of carved and gilded wood, precisely similar to those which bear the names of the honoured dead in every ancestral hall throughout the Empire. Every family of any importance has its own ancestral hall, wherein are stored the tablets commemorating all their dead, and the whole country is thickly strewn with temples to the honour of sages, saints, and heroes, all of whom are honoured in the same way.

No one can understand anything of Chinese life and motive, till he realizes how entirely ANCESTRAL WORSHIP is the keystone of all existence in the Celestial Empire.\* It permeates all life, affecting even the most trivial details of everyday existence, and is in influence tenfold more potent for keeping the people in the bondage of gross superstition than all the countless idols of the land, inasmuch as it compels every man to be for ever looking backward instead of forward, in fear lest he should by any action offend his very exacting ancestral spirits. In short, from his birth to his grave, the chief aim and end of every Chinaman is this constant propitiation of the dead.

This degrading slavery of the living to the dead involves a system of worship and sacrifices which must be offered ceaselessly, not necessarily from love to the departed, but in order to avert calamity should their displeasure be incurred by any neglect, or departure from ancient custom.

\* For fuller details see "Wanderings in China," by C. F. Gordon-Cumming. Published by W. Blackwood and Son.

It is a system of fear, which controls every act of life and all social organization, affecting alike the Imperial throne and the meanest coolie. However Tartars or Chinamen, from the far north or the extreme south, may differ on other matters, such as systems of religion, social position, dialect, &c., this is the one point on which all the three hundred millions are agreed—it is the one faith which all alike hold in awe and reverence, and which is indelibly impressed on their minds from their earliest infancy. No matter what other religion he professes, Buddhist, Taouist, or Confucian, every Chinaman's first duty is the care of sacrificing to his ancestors. This was the primitive religion of the land, and from it were derived the systems both of Laou-tse and of Confucius.

Confucius inculcated filial reverence as the primary obligation of mankind, and the majority of the Chinese obey his precept, but however bad a son may have been to his parents during their lifetime, from the hour of their death he becomes most punctilious in the observance of every detail of ancestral worship, lest the dead who have suddenly become so powerful should return to torment him, accompanied by a multitude of spirits more vicious than themselves.

The condition of the dead in the spirit world is supposed to depend entirely on the provision made for them by their survivors. These offerings should be presented by the nearest male relative, and it is very important that the relative should be a son. Hence, anxiety to secure a male heir to officiate at the ancestral worship is the true key to very early marriages, and to many domestic sorrows. The little bride may prove childless, and must accept the sons of secondary wives—a fruitful source of heart-burning. Hence, too, the lamentations which too often greet the birth of a baby girl, who is incapable of ministering to the spirits, and is therefore in many cases not considered worth the expense of rearing. Thus it is that ancestor-worship lies at



the root of the appalling female infanticide of China, a practice which is fully sanctioned by public opinion. Sooner than leave no son to minister at the ancestral altar, a Chinaman will, if possible, adopt one. This substitute must of course be younger than the supposed father, and this rule is slavishly adhered to, even at the risk of serious jeopardy to great interests.

No more striking instance could be adduced than the selection of Kwang-Su, the present Emperor, who, at the time of the late Emperor's early death, was under four years of age. In the interests of the Empire it would have seemed desirable to confer the Imperial crown on one of the adult princes, but as all these were older than the deceased Emperor, they were incapable of offering the requisite worship, and the only person capable of fulfilling the conditions was this little child. But as the young Emperor Tung Chi had left no heir on earth to offer sacrifice to his own father Hien Fung, the infant Emperor was officially constituted heir to Hien Fung, with a promise to the spirits that his first-born son should be the especial heir to Tung Chi!

One of the principal temples in Peking is that of "The Imperial Ancestors," in which are ranged the Imperial tablets of the last ten generations, Emperors and Empresses being arranged in pairs, all facing the south. In secondary halls are stored the tablets of Imperial relatives, loyal officers, and other persons of such distinguished merit as to entitle them to be spiritual guests at the sacrificial banquets. At the great festivals in honour of the dead, large offerings of food, incense, lighted candles, pieces of rich silk, and carcasses of divers animals are laid before the tablets of each Imperial couple, and the Emperor, on his knees, addresses prayers by name to each of those, his deceased predecessors, both Emperors and Empresses (whose titles in each case number from twelve to twenty words). Then the offerings are burnt, that their spiritual essence



may float away to the spirit land, after which follows a sacramental service, if I may so call it, similar to that already described—the Imperial High Priest himself receiving on low-bended knee “the Cup of Blessing” and “the Meat of Blessing.” On this occasion, after the Emperor and his nobles have partaken of the sacred elements, the officer in charge of “the Blessed Wine” places a cup before each of the tablets, representing the Imperial Ancestors, both male and female, that all may share in this communion of the dead. In the course of this solemn service the Emperor is required to kneel sixteen times, and to knock his forehead on the ground no less than thirty-six times. All his nobles are required to do likewise, thus giving to all the people an example of filial piety.

But this is a mere trifle compared with the amount of head-knocking which forms part of the ceremonial mourning during the hundred days after the death of a parent. No matter how important may be the Government office held by the bereaved son, or even grandson, or at how great a distance he may be from his ancestral home, he is actually *obliged* to retire from public life for many months, and return to spend upwards of three months in seclusion. During this time visitors are only admitted on certain days, and on these the unfortunate chief mourner must be found before the coffin, crouching on his hands and knees, weeping and howling.

Many and serious are the expenses to which a family is subjected on the death of one of its members. In the first place they must immediately burn all his best clothes, for though paper representations will do later, genuine articles must be sacrificed for his original outfit, to secure a good reception for him in the spirit world. The funeral arrangements must all be on the most liberal scale possible, and the survivors often impoverish themselves for years to provide a decent burial. So essential is the provision of a good coffin that the Chinese form of insurance, instead of

having reference to the comfort of old age, goes to entitle the subscriber to a coffin and grave clothes, to secure which he must for sixteen years pay about a shilling annually to a Long Life Loan Company.

Every man is supposed to have three souls, one of which remains with the corpse in the tomb; the second watches over the tablet which bears its name in the Ancestral Hall; while the third goes forth into the world of darkness to undergo trial and punishment at the hands of the judicial rulers of purgatory. Friends who desire to comfort their dead must therefore make separate offerings on behalf of each of his three souls; so they must by turns visit the grave, the Ancestral Hall, and the temple of Cheng Hwang, the deity into whose jurisdiction the soul has passed, and where it is truly a spirit in prison, subject to all the pains and persecutions which the Chinese have such good cause to associate with confinement in their own horrible prisons. The spirit is supposed to be at the mercy of a multitude of extortionate prison authorities, who must be freely bribed by the living to mitigate the penalties of purgatory; herein the priests, both Taouist and Buddhist, reap a never-failing harvest from the bereaved relatives, to whom they convey revelations of the agonies which the dead are enduring, and so extract the utmost possible sums in money and jewellery to purchase their release. Troops of priests attend the prolonged funeral rites, and keep up services for the repose of the dead and the exorcising of evil spirits: thus the days of mourning often involve an expenditure of thousands of dollars.

Even when the family are assured that their relative has been delivered, they have no security against being favoured with renewed revelations from the spirit world, which public opinion would not suffer them to ignore. For the dead have no haven of rest to which they may attain. There is no Lord of Mercy in the world beyond the grave. Theoretically the Buddhist may attain to a blissful Nirvana, but

the three hundred millions of China believe practically that the departed roam at large in a realm where devils and demons rule, and where they are as entirely dependent on the gifts of their friends as are the captives in a Chinese prison. Hence the obligation of ancestor-worship.

It is believed that in this spirit world there are an incalculable host of miserable beggar-spirits, who either have left no relations to sacrifice for them, or for some other reason have been neglected. These uncared-for dead avenge themselves on mankind by revisiting earth and afflicting the living with all manner of diseases and misfortunes. Therefore thrice a year propitiatory sacrifices are offered to these wanderers in every provincial town throughout the vast empire. Every family in every city must contribute to the fund, which by appeasing the spirits contributes to the public good. For several successive nights priests from all the temples parade the streets with torches and lanterns, and form picturesque processions of fire-boats on the rivers, inviting the unfed spirits, who may be wandering at large, to come and share the burnt-offering.

Once in ten years these festivals for the consolation of the dead are held on a very grand scale, and continue for seven consecutive days, during which time the Buddhists and Taouists unite their forces to make more showy processions, the images of Buddha and Laou-tse, the founders of the two faiths, being carried in highly-decorated chairs, escorted by their respective priests—the Buddhists in their yellow robes, scarlet mantles, and shaven heads, the Taouists in robes of gold-brocaded green satin, with their hair plaited and rolled up, and fastened with a tortoise-shell comb.

Besides these public offerings, many persons burn large offerings at their own doors, to insure the spirits giving them full credit for their alms, and so refraining from molesting them. As to the family offerings to their own relatives, that is simply a never-ending business, and the manufacture of paper models of every conceivable object for transmission

to the dead forms the sole work of a multitude of men and women ; and while all this lamentable waste of substance is going on, the starving beggars find it hard to extract the smallest coin wherewith to purchase a handful of rice ; for fear, not charity, is the ruling motive in all this display.

Of course, this is a subject on which it is impossible to obtain accurate statistics, but enough is known to prove that the sums annually expended throughout the Empire are simply astounding. A very careful and apparently moderate estimate of the average expenditure in all villages and towns throughout the Empire runs up a grand annual total of \$150,000,000, or 32,000,000%. English !

As a matter of course, this whole system is the greatest bar that could by any possibility be devised to check the adoption of Christianity. It is firmly believed that the Chinaman who confesses himself a Christian, and refuses to perform the accustomed acts of Ancestral Worship, thereby consigns all his ancestors for the five previous generations to a state of perpetual beggary. He brings on himself the curse, not only of all his kinsmen, friends, and neighbours, but of all the mighty dead, whom he is most bound to revere and care for, and whose curse it is indeed terrible to incur. Even if he so fully realizes the teaching of Christianity as to be convinced that his dead ancestors require no aid from him, still it is hard to be scouted and misjudged by all, condemned by his superiors, and, worst of all, beset by the entreaties of all his female relatives, with one accord pleading for the unhappy dead.

The most terrible form in which such family opposition is occasionally displayed is when parents have deliberately informed their son, who inclined to become a Christian, that should he so disgrace the family they would at once commit suicide. The sting of this threat lies in the fact that, by Chinese law, a man who by his misdeeds drives his parents to kill themselves is a malefactor worthy of the most ignominious of all deaths, namely, decapitation, a far-reaching

disgrace, which ensures his signal punishment in the next world, where headless spirits are treated with peculiar contumely. So, as by becoming a Christian the son would unfit himself for the performance of the rites of ancestral worship, his life was not worth preserving, and his parents might as well be avenged of so unworthy a son!

From this summary of a most intricate and far-reaching subject it is evident that any one desiring to understand China and the Chinese must bear in mind how potent and all-pervading is this influence. In one form, indeed, the dread of thwarting the dead is for ever coming to the surface in regard to the mysterious natural powers alluded to as Feng-Shui, which, literally interpreted, means only Wind and Water, but which apparently has special reference to the repose of the dead, and the influence of the mighty host of disembodied spirits upon the welfare of the living. It is almost impossible for a foreigner to arrive at any exact understanding of this great over-ruling belief of the Chinese millions, and yet no one can be many hours in the country ere the term becomes so familiar as to make its solution a matter much to be desired. Whether it is a proposal to make a railway or to build a top storey to a house, this vague shadowy spirit of evil forbids the work. As regards the railway, the whole country is dotted with ancestral graves, and there is danger that making a railway would stir up the spirits of countless past generations, and let loose on the country a whole army of malevolent ghosts. On the other hand, to raise a wall may arrest the course of kindly spirits, or of the shadowy great dragon who brings blessing. Or to pull down an existing wall may allow the approach of evil spirits from an unlucky quarter;—all of which sounds exceedingly foolish, but is nevertheless a deeply rooted belief in the minds of the whole Chinese race. So that at any time a cry of FENG-SHUI, raised by the literati, will inflame the deadliest superstitions of the populace, who accept it as a warning that something is being done which

may annoy their dead ancestors, in which case they will inevitably begin by taking vengeance on the offender. Consequently the very word suffices to incite them to all manner of mischief.

Thus FEAR OF AND REVERENCE FOR THE DEAD, combined with the myterious FENG-SHUI, form the ruling principle of all existence in China. They are the twin giants whose power all acknowledge, and against whom all resistance seems useless.

There can be no doubt that the great numerical success of Roman Catholic Missions in China is in a large measure due to their sanction of something closely akin to Ancestral Worship, in the form of Masses for the Dead—services scarcely to be distinguished from those which the convert has ever believed to be the highest form of worship—together with a similar teaching regarding Purgatory, and highly realistic pictures of the tortures of a material Hell.

But apart from deep-seated care for the dead, all that custom has endeared to the outward senses of the Buddhist he may retain in the Church of Rome. How easy is the transition from the worship of the Goddess of Mercy with the young Child, and either the Dragon or the Serpent under her feet, to that of the Holy Mother with the infant Saviour standing on the Serpent's head. As to the whole company of Buddhist saints, with the golden glory circling every head, their appearance is scarcely to be distinguished from the saints of Christendom. There is the same use of images, incense, holy water, ringing of consecrated bells, prostrations, multiplied fasts, reiteration of short prayers, a gorgeously vested and shaven priesthood, monasteries, and convents. The total suppression of the second commandment in the abridged form of the Roman Decalogue obviates difficulties regarding the use of "graven images," and as the Roman Catholics have never published any Chinese translation of the Holy Scriptures, their converts are in no



danger of discovering too much on this or any other subject.

According to the Roman Catholic Register of Hong Kong the statistics of Roman Missions in the Empire are as follows :—Bishops, 41 ; European priests, 664 ; native priests, 559 ; colleges, 34 ; convents, 34 ; native converts, 1,092,818.

Long ere China had begun to sanction foreign intercourse with her people, devoted Jesuit missionaries, in the dress of the country, had contrived to effect an entrance, and in the 16th and 17th centuries, having secured a footing by reason of their scientific attainments, were able to preach with much acceptance, making many converts. Had they adhered to religious teaching, their converts would doubtless have been legion, but the usual rash meddling with politics soon aroused fear of foreign aggression, leading to violent opposition and terrible persecution, which have been repeated with every fresh scare of undue political influence. Hence those terrible massacres in Southern Annam in the autumn of 1885, when the number of victims was estimated at 35,000, only 6000 of the Christian population of an entire district being saved ; churches, schools, convents, hospitals, and asylums were burnt to the ground after they had been pillaged, and the Roman Catholic Mission, which had taken so many years to create, was totally crushed.

All this bloodshed was due simply to the political connexion between the Roman Catholics and the French, who claimed jurisdiction over all such, and also their exemption from taxation. It is this arrogating of temporal authority which has so incensed the Chinese, and which accounts for much of the hostility to missionaries and converts of all Christian churches and denominations, as the ignorant masses naturally could not discriminate between Protestants and Roman Catholics. Hence, in the Edict of Toleration proclaimed in 1886, the Imperial Government deem it necessary to state that men who may embrace Christianity do not cease to be Chinese, but as such are entitled to all pro-

tection from their own Government, to which alone they owe obedience. The promulgation of this Edict followed immediately on the decision of the Pope to send a Papal Legate to the Court of Peking to represent him as the sole Foreign Power interested in the Chinese Roman Catholics, thereby totally disclaiming all political protection from France.

This Edict promises to mark an altogether new era for Christian work in China. Just before the year of Queen Victoria's Accession, in 1837, when there were scarcely a dozen Protestant Christians in the Empire, the Emperor of China fulminated an edict against Christianity. To-day there are upwards of a hundred thousand recognized members of different Protestant bodies, and of these twenty-two thousand are communicants, and that, not as a matter of course, as may too often be the case in countries where Christianity is the recognized badge of respectability, but as a sure pledge of being thoroughly in earnest, and ready to endure persecution in many bitter forms. And truly the majority of these converts have not only confessed their faith in Christ at the imminent risk of their lives, but have also striven with patient perseverance to bring others to the same knowledge and love, so that almost every convert has proved a leavening influence among his own neighbours.

And now, just before Queen Victoria's Jubilee, the Imperial Government issued the aforesaid new proclamation, explaining to all the people that the Christian religion teaches men to do right, and should therefore be respected. Consequently it calls on the people to live at peace with Christian missionaries and converts.

Such is the record of progress in the first fifty years of Protestant Mission work in China.

It was not till A.D. 1807 that the very first awakening effort of Protestant Christianity resulted in the London Missionary Society resolving to send Dr. Robert Morrison to endeavour



to commence work in China. But in those days the route to the East lay practically in the hands of the merchants forming the East India Company, by whom such difficulties had been thrown in the way of the missionaries proceeding to India that it was deemed expedient not to apply to them for a passage, but to adopt the then difficult route *viâ* America. Thus he reached Canton in 1808. Once there, the Company were glad to secure his great linguistic services, and he was appointed translator to their factory at Canton, and thus, at their expense, at a cost of 15,000*l.*, was published his great Chinese dictionary. This, however, was not ready till 1822. In 1814 he published the first Chinese version of the New Testament, half of which was translated by himself, and the other half was revised from a manuscript found in the British Museum. With the assistance of Milne, he next prepared a complete translation of the Bible, which was published in 1818. He also established an Anglo-Chinese College at Malacca for English and Chinese literature. Thus for twenty-seven years he toiled unceasingly, preparing the way for those who should follow, and during all these years only three fellow-workers came to his help. The first convert was baptized in 1814, but it was not till about 1842 that any perceptible progress was made. In 1834 this persevering pioneer died at Canton, and his body was carried to the Portuguese settlement at Macao, there to be laid beside his wife and son in the Christian burial-ground—now grass-grown and neglected.

In 1830 the American Board of Foreign Missions sent its first emissaries to commence work in China; and by 1838 three other American societies had followed suit.

In 1836, the Church Missionary Society sent Mr. E. B. Squire to ascertain whether it were possible to establish a Mission in China; but little was done till after the Treaty of Nanking, in 1844, which gave foreigners the right of residence at certain ports. About this time an

anonymous donor offered 6000*l.* to start a China Mission, and in 1845 the Society commenced work at Shanghai. This was relinquished in 1867, but renewed in 1870. Ningpo was occupied in 1848, Fuh-chow in 1850, Hong-Kong and Peking (after the taking of the city by the allied English and French forces) in 1862 and 1863, Hang-chow in 1865, Shaou-hing in 1870, Canton in 1881, Pak-hoi in 1886.

As regards Episcopal jurisdiction, the Empire was in 1872 divided into two vast bishopries, North and South China. The latter is under the Bishop of Victoria, Hong-Kong. Its first Bishop, Dr. G. Smith, and the third, the present Bishop (Dr. Burdon), were C.M.S. missionaries, and the second, Dr. Alford, an active member of the Society at home. Bishop Burdon joined the Shanghai Mission in 1853, and six years later started as a pioneer to see whether there was any possibility of commencing a Mission at Hang-chow, where he remained for some months, first living in a boat outside the city, and afterwards sharing small rooms in a Buddhist monastery with Mr. Nevius, of the American Presbyterian Mission. In 1861 he again started as a pioneer, and established himself in the great city of Shaou-hing, a hundred miles to the west of Ningpo, where he held his ground till driven back by the advance of the Tae-ping insurgents. In 1862 he accompanied Bishop Smith to Peking, to judge whether it were possible for the C.M.S. to commence work in the northern capital, where Dr. Lockhart, of the London Mission, had been the first to enter and commence medical work. From that far north Mr. Burdon was called to be the Bishop of Southern China.

The C.M.S. continued to work in Peking till 1880, when, on the division of North China into two separate dioceses, the appointment of Bishop Scott of the S.P.G. to the Bishopric of North China, and his residence at Chefoo, suggested the wisdom of resigning that field to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

The first Bishop of the original diocese of North China was Dr. Russell of the C.M.S., who was consecrated in Westminster Abbey in 1872. His centre of work was at Ningpo, in the Che-kiang Province. The progress of mission work, both in Che-kiang and Fuh-kien, has been remarkable, the more so as the people of these provinces, and that of Kwan-tung, have strongly-marked characteristics common to the inhabitants of hilly countries. They are said to be the most restless and enterprising of the Chinese, and have been described as "the Anglo-Saxons of Asia."

It was amongst these that Bishop Russell worked with marvellous patience alone and despised for many years ere he was rewarded by making any converts. But he lived to see the fruit of his labours, and to find himself revered by all the Chinese who came within his influence. On his death, Dr. G. E. Moule was consecrated first Bishop of the new see of Mid-China, which comprises the eight provinces Keang-su, Nganh-wei, Che-kiang, Keang-si, Hupeh, Hunan, Szechuen, and Kweichow,—an area of about 350,000 square miles, with a population of 100,000,000 souls. It is unnecessary to enumerate the provinces included in the north and south sees, which of course comprise all the rest of the Empire.

Of the work carried on by other Christian societies, it is of course impossible here to speak in detail. It must suffice to say that within the last quarter of a century a tardy interest in this vast mission-field has begun to awake, and about forty different religious societies have now sent representatives to do what little they can, amounting to a total of about 500 missionaries, and perhaps 600 wives and unmarried women—British, American, and German. These are assisted by about 150 ordained native ministers and about 1300 lay helpers. But, contrasting these few hundreds with China's millions, and reflecting on the mere physical difficulties which any one man, unaided by a choir, or even efficient assistants, experiences in even collecting

an attentive audience of a few hundred persons, and in addressing them on a subject of which they have no previous knowledge, and with which they have no sympathy, we can only say, "What are these among so many?"

It has been calculated that such evangelists as Messrs. Moody and Sankey (with their fellow-workers of every description, aided by Christian books and papers) might, by preaching twelve times a week to congregations of five thousand persons, address every person of London's five millions once in the course of twelve years—and to do this would cost unremitting united labour, and large pecuniary outlay. At this rate it is shown that if every missionary, male and female, in China were physically capable of reaching 100,000 souls, there would still remain a surplus of about 200,000,000 beyond the possibility of hearing of the gift which those who received it 1800 years ago were commissioned to offer to all mankind. To realize what this number of 100,000 means, we may observe that the population of Manchester is 341,508, and that of Glasgow 511,532; so it is as if three and five preachers endeavoured to evangelize these two cities! In our own little isle of Great Britain 35,000 ministers of the Church and of all Christian denominations complain of their inability to reach a large section of our comparatively small population of about 30,000,000, although their work is supplemented by that of a host of schoolmasters, Sunday-school teachers, and assistants of all sorts.

Well has it been said, "Our Master has taught us that if even one sheep out of a hundred be lost, we are to leave the ninety-and-nine, and seek the strayed one, whereas, looking at the proportion of shepherds and sheep, teachers and taught, in China and Britain, the care seems lavished on the one sheep at home, while the ninety-and-nine are left unheeded on the mountains."

Considering the fewness of the evangelists, the very great disadvantages under which they have hitherto worked, and

the extreme slowness of the average Chinaman to accept new ideas, the progress of the last quarter of a century must be accepted as satisfactory, the more so as every genuine convert becomes a leavening principle, almost invariably endeavouring to influence others to accept the same Saviour. Moreover it must be remembered that Mission influence extends far beyond the circle of actual adherents—that prejudices have been modified, and confidence won from multitudes who as yet give no sign of any personal leaning to the Christian faith.

It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of earnestly prosecuting the work in this field. The vigour and intellectual strength of a race which year by year multiplies as the sand of the sea, asserting its right to colonize in every quarter of the globe, the patient perseverance and determination by which they triumph over all obstacles, and their staunch adherence to whatever they accept as the true faith,—these are qualities which make every grain of Christian influence which can be brought to bear on the Chinese doubly important. It is very certain that they will continue more and more to overrun the earth, exerting a very definite power for good or for evil; therefore, were it only from self-interest, it behoves all nations of the earth to help in conveying to China a knowledge of “the more excellent way.”

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